

BE Graduate Student Survey 2005

October, 2005

Each year the Biological Engineering Division Student Board (<http://web.mit.edu/beboard>) conducts a survey of all BE graduate students to gather information about their opinions, experiences, and perspectives relating to the Division.

Your feedback is critical and appreciated. The results of this survey will be compiled and presented to the BE graduate faculty and administration as part of the Division's Graduate Program Review in mid-October.

If you have any questions pertaining to this survey, please email be-grad-survey@mit.edu. If you have any questions relating to the BE Student Board in general, please email beboard@mit.edu or visit <http://web.mit.edu/beboard/contactus.html> to submit your question anonymously.

Thank you very much for your time and opinions. They will be extremely beneficial in helping us in shaping our ever-changing BE Division.

--the BE Student Board

In this electronic survey, some questions will ask for a numerical response corresponding to the following rankings:

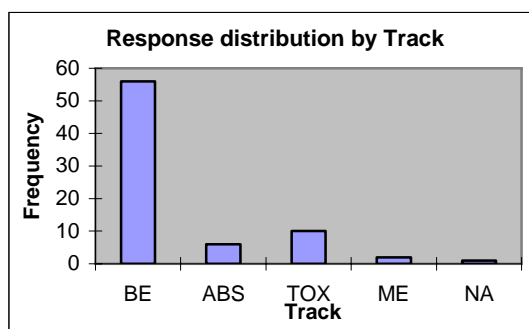
- 1 = strong disagreement
- 2 = mild disagreement
- 3 = neutral
- 4 = mild agreement
- 5 = strong agreement

Other questions will contain text boxes for comments. A text box for general comments can be found at the end of this survey.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

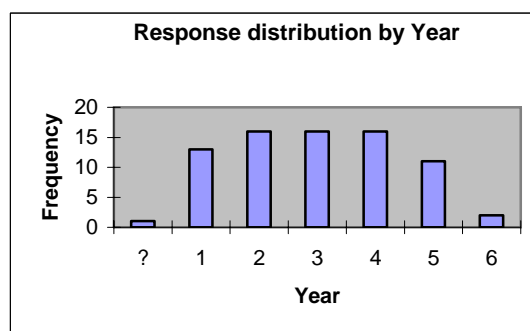
Please select your BE graduate program track.

BE	56
ABS	6
TOX	10
ME	2
NA	1



Please enter the year in which you started your BE graduate program.

Unknown	1
1	13
2	16
3	16
4	16
5	11
6	2



Responses Average/Result

2. BEFORE JOINING BE

If you are a student in the graduate entering class of 2003 or earlier (i.e. a 3rd year or later) you can skip this section and resume with Section 3.)

[2.1] Rank the reasons that made you choose to join MIT's Biological Engineering Division. Please rank in terms of importance. (1=most important, 8=least important)

		55 (total)	
[2.1.1]	research opportunities	54	2.13±1.59
[2.1.5]	MIT prestige	53	3.09±1.82
[2.1.3]	potential advisors	53	3.13±1.75
[2.1.2]	course work/overall curriculum	51	3.82±1.48
[2.1.7]	location/atmosphere of Boston	53	4.30±1.75
[2.1.6]	financial considerations (stipend, foreseen expenses)	50	5.20±1.96
[2.1.4]	framework of the qualifying exams	47	6.36±1.57
[2.1.8]	other	27	6.11±2.41

[2.1.com] Please specify any "other" reasons that made you decide to choose join BE.

Others (2) MIT atmosphere: creativity, collaboration, and interdisciplinary research

Others (2) Community feel, atmosphere, culture of BE division

Others (2) Students in the program, who were more excited and focused on their research than at other programs.

Others (2) Biological Engineering vs. BME | I love Biological Engineering
 Others (2) it was the only place I was accepted
 Others (1) strong recommendations from undergraduate professors
 Others (1) Good mix of students from all over the world!
 Others (1) Extracurricular/other departmental opportunities
 Others (1) Proximity to family members
 Others (1) MIT relations with Industry sector and reputation for developing research into new companies with marketable products
 Others (1) a kind of "what-the-hell" mentality

[2.2.1] It was easy to find information about the BE graduate program. 55 3.49±1.215

[2.2.2] The BE website was useful in that respect. 48 3.46±1.443

[2.2.3.com] Where did you find information about the BE graduate program?

Others (27) BE website
 Others (3) MIT PhD application page | MIT website | Other websites at MIT (biology)
 Others (4) BE Headquarters, BE Faculty
 Others (4) Students currently in the BE program.
 Others (4) Interview Weekend
 Others (2) From my undergraduate advisor
 Others (1) brochure
 Others (1) Visit from MIT recruiter
 Others (1) peterson.com

[2.2.4.com] Where else would you wish it to be available?

Others (4) Would like to be able to contact current graduate students
 Others (2) Flyers/pamphlets at undergrad institution
 Others (1) Online
 Others (1) Mailed brochures
 Others (1) Recruiters at undergrad institution

Others (5) Content of BE website needs improvement:
 (3) it was very hard to find up-to-date info about the faculty
 (3) I wanted more links to laboratories, listing current research and students
 (2) I wanted a page for a lot of graduate students and the research topics they are working with
 (1) I did not know about the 2 tracks until after I applied to BE
 (1) I did not know the difference between BE, HST, BME
 (1) style of website needs improvement

[2.3.1] Before I joined BE, I was aware of a distinction between BE (biological engineering) and BME (biomedical engineering). (1=yes, 2=no) 55 28 Yes
 27 No

If you attended the recruitment weekend, please answer this section (2.4a).
 If you did not attend the recruitment weekend, please proceed to section 2.4b if you were able to arrange an on-campus visit at a later time or section 2.4c if you had a telephone interview

[2.4a.1] The recruitment weekend was informative and helpful. 32 4.06±1.46

[2.4a.2] The question and answer session was long enough. 32 4.03±1.28

[2.4a.3] The question and answer session was informative.	32	3.87±1.04
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[2.4a.4] The informal activities (campus tour, dinner, post-dinner party) with current students were valuable.	32	3.94±1.41
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If you did not attend the recruitment weekend but did arrange a separate campus visit, please answer this section.

[2.4b.1] My visit to campus affected my decision to attend MIT.	11	4.18±1.40
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[2.4b.2] My campus visit was a reasonable substitute for the recruitment weekend.	11	3.45±1.29
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[2.4b.3] BE should offer multiple recruitment weekends.	11	3.45±1.57
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If you did not attend the recruitment weekend but did arrange a separate telephone interview, please answer this section.

[2.4c.1] Having a telephone interview was a reasonable substitute for on-campus interviews.	9	2.67±1.32
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[2.4c.2] A campus visit would have affected my view of BE.	9	4.00±0.71
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[2.5.1] Having a graduate student advisor was helpful.	49	3.20±1.50
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[2.5.2] My interaction with my graduate student advisor was: (1=too much,2=too little,3=just right)	48	0 too much 11 too little 37 just enough
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3. CURRICULUM & QUALS IN BE

[3.1.1] The BE Division has too many/too few/just enough graduate students. (1=too many,2=too few,3=just enough)	72	3 too many 5 too few 64 just enough
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[3.1.2] The BE Division has too many/too few/just enough faculty members. (1=too many,2=too few,3=just enough)	71	2 too many 26 too few 43 just enough
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[3.2.1] The average time it takes to graduate with a PhD in BE is approximately 5.5 years. This is too long/too short/just right. (1=too long,2=too short,3=just right)	73	37 too long 0 too short 36 just right
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[3.3.1] I feel that the four core courses prepare me well for the first year written qualifying exam	59	4.17±1.05
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[3.3.2] I feel that the four core courses provide a good foundation for my PhD degree.	66	3.41±0.98
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[3.3.3] I feel that the four core courses are relevant to my research and/or future career goals.	67	3.10±1.16
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[3.4.1] I find the elective requirements useful for my curriculum in BE.	67	3.57±1.22
[3.4.2] I am offered a good selection of bioengineering electives.	67	2.84±1.26
[3.4.3] I do NOT have trouble taking electives because of schedule conflicts	66	3.64±1.33
[3.5.1] I had a positive interaction with the professor(s) during my TA experience.	54	4.02±1.16
[3.5.2] I find that the time commitment during my TA experience was reasonable.	54	3.48±1.27
[3.5.3] I find that my TA experience was educationally valuable.	54	3.94±1.11
[3.5b.1] Do you feel the disparity in the workload of different TA's is unfair? (1=yes,2=no)	61	32 Yes 29 No

[3.5b.com] If so, what could be done to improve this disparity?

Others (13) Assign appropriate number of TA's to each class, based on work load
 Others (3) Pay the TAs
 Others (3) Add graders
 Others (1) Add BE undergrad TAs when undergrad program is running
 Others (3) Even out TA time commitment by adding extra TA assignments (classes, advising undergrads, working with UROPs, etc) of varying loads | use a point system
 Others (5) Establish formal guidelines detailing expectations, hours, etc; include up-front meetings between with course professors to establish course load
 Others (3) Ask for TA volunteers
 Others (1) Try to match TA's better with their preferred courses
 Others (2) not much you can do about it / not a big deal, only one semester
 Others (1) instruction either through a seminar or a semester long class to teach student how to teach and introduce them to the skills necessary to develop a class and lecture material

[3.6.1] I feel that I was well informed about the oral qualifying exam process.	53	3.49±1.41
[3.6.2] I feel that I was well prepared for the oral qualifying exam.	44	3.95±1.12
[3.6.3] The written qualifying exam is a fair and worthwhile test.	60	3.52±1.41
[3.7.1] I attend nearly all of the BE research seminars.	71	3.13±1.01
[3.7.2] I attend because the seminars are generally interesting /relevant.	70	3.53±0.97
[3.7.3] I attend because it is a subject requirement.	65	2.55±1.33
[3.7.4] I go to socialize with friends from other buildings.	65	2.89±1.19

[3.8.com] In your eyes, what is lacking/over-emphasized in the graduate curriculum?

Others (2) there is a good balance

lacking

Others (6) math, statistics, and data analysis techniques in either core courses or electives
 Others (4) flexibility and breadth in electives
 Others (3) course teaching lab techniques, logic and methods-based biology

Others (2) ethics
 Others (1) interaction with industry and industry-related research
 Others (1) what engineering and physics tools can bring to biological research
 Others (1) biophysics
 Others (1) neuroscience
 Others (1) prokaryotic systems
 Others (1) material derived from material science
 Others (1) material derived from computer science/electrical engineering
 Others (1) finance/management courses, education about industry
 Others (1) Courses are not detailed enough b/c they have to account for people of different backgrounds
 Others (1) BE content should be more in-depth and challenging
 Others (1) design course
 Others (1) options for students to learn about the teaching process and course development
 Others (1) beef up BE.400
 Others (1) lacking recognition of research diversity
 Others (1) lacking student input with regard to curriculum planning of core courses
 Others (1) need more modeling courses
 Others (1) need more info on life after grad school
 Others (1) some people need / wanted more basic bio before starting program

over-emphasized

Others (4) mechanics | BE.410 could be more broad
 Others (2) computational modeling | Matlab
 Others (1) too much stuff related to systems biology
 Others (1) research done by MIT faculty

4. CHOICE OF A LAB IN BE

[4.1.1] On the interview day, I was made aware of the research opportunities in BE. 60 3.80±1.15

[4.2.com] What research area would you like to see covered in BE that is presently lacking?

(4) Neuralscience/engineering ---> well suited to quantitative study
 (1) Bioengineering for environmental applications
 (1) Engineering of biological systems
 (1) Prokaryotic engineering
 (1) Chemical Biology
 (1) Immunology
 (1) Energy
 (1) Much of the work done in the Broad institute is not represented in the division although it is clearly in the subject frame of systems biology and high-throughput science. Eg. Chemical genetics, high throughput RNAi screen etc.
 (1) My interests are pretty well covered, but I don't think there is a good computational systems person. Not Bioinformatics and mining, but someone who is an expert in general systems. Tidor is good, but that is really not his background.
 (1) 'Systems biology' of the flavor of Alex van Oudenaarden, Uri Alon, Stan Leibler, etc. Perhaps CSBI will incorporate this sort of science more directly, but BE research really seems to be built on this foundation, in moving from small and medium-sized models to the large ones it uses for apoptosis, EGF signaling, etc. Having PIs who are interested in understanding the function of smaller modules would be a welcome addition.

[4.3.1] One semester was enough time to choose an advisor. 64 3.34±1.39

[4.3.2] Meeting with at least three professors was a positive approach.	61	3.69±1.22
[4.3.3] I had freedom to choose an advisor.	65	3.94±1.26
[4.3.4] The faculty research presentations helped me choose an advisor.	58	3.60±1.21
[4.3.5] If the BE Retreat had been held before the advisor selection deadline, it would have aided my decision.	57	3.54±1.31
[4.3.6] A formal lab rotation system would have helped me choose an advisor.	67	2.82±1.46
[4.3.7] I would like this rotation system to be available / compulsory. (1=not in favor of rotation system,2=in favor of optional rotation system, 3=in favor of compulsory rotation system)	68	18 not in favor 38 optional 12 compulsory
[4.3.8] I had the flexibility to pursue research opportunities with dual advisors.	44	3.77±1.22
[4.4.1] My advisor provides me with adequate scientific guidance.	63	3.79±1.23
[4.4.2] I feel unreasonable pressure from my advisor.	62	1.97±1.12
[4.4.3] I feel unreasonable pressure from my coworkers.	62	1.94±1.17
[4.4.4] There are enough interdisciplinary interactions in my lab.	63	3.81±1.19
[4.5.1] I have a good understanding of the procedure by which professors in BE become tenured.	69	2.54±1.16
[4.5.2] I feel that student feedback should be factored into BE tenure decisions.	66	3.53±1.38
[4.5.com] Comments about the BE tenure process:		

(3) Being informed of the tenure process:

- * The students and staff should be allowed to understand/know the detailed process of the BE tenure process and how (if at all) the BE tenure process differs from other SoE disciplines and MIT regulations.
- * While I understand that there needs to be discretion with specific individuals, knowledge of perhaps what kept people from getting tenure would be informative.
- * It's obscure to me, but that's because I haven't taken the time to understand it; I blame none but myself :)

(3) Emphasis on student feedback:

- * In the faculty hiring and tenure process, greater emphasis should be placed on teaching skills and success with graduate student relations.
- * MIT is a research institution. Tenure should be based on research capability not on student relations.
- * Student feedback should be considered, but as a small factor. Aside from the teaching reviews already filled out at the end of classes, if it's not already done, perhaps invite students to write letters on a professor's behalf that may give a better sense of how a professor fits into the BE community. Ultimately, I imagine the most important component is scientific contribution, though.

5. UNDERGRADUATE BE MAJOR

[5.1.1] I think that two terms of required TA service is reasonable for a graduate student in a full department.	73	2.64±1.31
[5.1.2] I would be willing to serve as an associate advisor for my professor's undergraduate advisees without financial incentive.	72	2.97±1.52

[5.1.3] A stipend for TA service beyond the requirement would be enough incentive for me to TA as many times as necessary.	71	3.32±1.45
[5.2.1] I am concerned about what might happen to the availability of my advisor and committee members if they take on extra undergraduate advisees and teaching requirements.	69	3.23±1.29
[5.3.1] I see a BE undergrad program as a great opportunity for my own education.	72	3.21±1.29
[5.3.2] I would be interested in hearing about the development and content of new BE undergraduate courses and how they fit into the overall curriculum.	71	3.87±1.29
[5.3.3] I think it would be a valuable educational experience for graduate students to play a more active role in developing the undergraduate curriculum.	70	3.76±1.26
[5.3.com] If so, what suggestions do you have for such interactions?		
(1) A session for all interested parties at the yearly retreat		
(1) Perhaps graduate students could have access to the evaluations of students in the undergraduate courses that they TA. TA's and professors could then discuss potential improvements to the course.		
(1) Having student input for A) which courses should be included, B) which are mandatory, which are elective, and C) the content of certain courses.		
1) To aid in curriculum development, course plans should be presented to the Division (perhaps in a seminar-type forum?) to provide the opportunity for members of the BE community to provide initial feedback on the undergraduate curriculum.		
[5.4.1] BE has enough faculty to become a full department.	65	3.57±1.24
[5.4.2] BE has enough facilities (space) to become a full department.	63	2.67±1.26

6. SOCIAL INTERACTIONS IN BE

[6.1.1] There is enough social interaction between students in the Bioengineering and ABS tracks.	68	3.65±1.09
On a social level, I enjoy interacting with		
[6.2.1] Lab mates	66	3.94±1.08
[6.2.2] BE community	70	3.89±0.97
[6.2.3] Other groups at MIT	67	3.51±1.05
[6.2.4] Other groups outside of MIT	61	3.69±1.25
[6.3.1] The physically non-centralized nature of the BE division hinders social interaction.	68	3.38±1.16
[6.4.1] I like attending BE events.	71	3.85±1.12
[6.4.2] I enjoyed BE 526 after the BE seminar (weekly)	65	3.32±1.43
[6.4.3] I enjoyed the BE TGIFs (monthly)	57	3.77±1.23
[6.4.4] I enjoyed the BE Holiday Party (December)	53	4.06±1.25

[6.4.5] I enjoyed the BE/ChemE BBQ (August)	54	3.94±1.23
[6.4.6] I enjoyed the social activities during the BE Retreat (March)	58	4.14±1.18
[6.4.7] I think we should join efforts more often with other MIT departments for social events.	63	3.48±1.11
[6.5.1] I prefer the BE.526 social hour at the Muddy Charles Pub to the "cookie hours" that used to be held prior to the BE Thursday Seminars.	55	3.62±1.64
[6.6.1] I enjoy participating in BE IM sports.	51	3.73±1.47
[6.6.2] I prefer to participate in non-BE sports teams.	46	1.98±1.27
[6.7.com] What BE social events would you like to see more often organized?		
(2) It is really pretty good as it is. I am satisfied with current social activities.		
(2) Events with other departments too! Encourage interdisciplinary interactions and meet new people! More organized opportunities for social interaction with other departments at MIT or other bioengineering-related departments in Boston would provide greater social and professional latitude for graduate students and faculty. Obviously, such social opportunities must be lubricated by plentiful and subsidized beverages.		
(1) I think we have too much emphasis placed on social interaction. It seems like there is always something going on. I wish that this energy was spent more constructively. What about resume workshops, what about career day, what about something that might benefit us in the long term?		
(1) Party		
[6.7.1] I feel an online BE student directory of each class with photos and contact details would be useful.	72	4.28±1.20
I would be willing to include the following information for such a directory:		
[6.7.2] Photo (1=yes,2=no)	71	63 Yes 8 No
[6.7.3] Contact phone number (1=yes,2=no)	70	51 Yes 19 No
[6.7.4] Address (1=yes,2=no)	70	40 Yes 30 No
[6.7.5] Email Address (1=yes,2=no)	72	69 Yes 3 No
[6.7.6] Laboratory/PI (1=yes,2=no)	72	70 Yes 2 No

7. DIVERSITY IN BE

[7.1.1] BE organizes enough diversity related events.	63	3.70±1.01
[7.1.2] There should be more structured diversity related discussions and interactions.	61	3.02±1.10
[7.1.3] There should be more informal cultural events within BE to foster awareness of diversity in other peoples' backgrounds (e.g. food, crafts, arts, movies...)	62	3.50±1.16

[7.2.1] I am aware of the BE Diversity recruiting trips.	67	3.07±1.62
[7.2.2] I would be interested in going on one of these trips. (1=yes,2=no)	60	21 Yes 38 No
[7.3.1] BE should actively try and become more diverse.	67	3.09±1.18
[7.3.2] I feel that BE has effectively addressed issues related to diversity.	64	3.27±0.90
[7.3.3] I do NOT see diversity as being an issue in BE.	66	3.32±1.27
[7.4.1] I would be interested in helping to organize a diversity related event in BE and/or would like to become involved with the BE Diversity group. (1=yes,2=no)	65	20 Yes 44 No

8. BE STUDENT BOARD

[8.1.1] The BE Student Board initiatives have been brought to my attention.	70	3.71±1.25
[8.1.2] I know the names of a few members of the BE Student Board.	69	4.16±1.18
[8.1.3] I know how to get in touch with members of the BE Student Board.	69	4.17±1.24
[8.1.4] I have used the BE Board website.	68	3.60±1.62
[8.1.5] I am aware that elections are held to yearly renew the BE Student Board.	68	4.34±1.14
[8.1.6] I would like the BE Student Board initiatives to be advertised better.	65	3.05±1.36
[8.2.1] When the BE Student Board holds meetings, I am informed of them.	67	4.42±1.06
[8.2.2] I feel comfortable attending the BE Student Board monthly meetings.	58	3.55±1.30
[8.2.3] I would like the agenda of the BE Student Board meetings to be sent to me via email.	65	3.12±1.49
[8.2.4] I would like the minutes of the BE Student Board meetings to be sent to me via email.	66	2.61±1.46

[8.3.com] Are there novel projects you would like the BE Student Board to be in charge of?

(1) A coffee machine

(1) Keeping track of alumni (which should increase to a significant number shortly)

(1) A department newsletter to inform all students, faculty and staff of dept happenings would be nice

[8.4.com] What could the board do more effectively to make the settling in process easier for new 1st years?

(1) Organize regular study breaks

(1) Fine as it is. Just making sure the department is focused on them, and gives them a lot of attention, makes people more welcome, facilitating their transition.

(1) Connect first-years via e-mail list during the summer

(1) Provide compiled practical info (e.g.: moving, the dept., living a full BE life...)

- (2) Try to arrange events that don't create a conflict with course work
 (1) Organize a shopping trip the week before classes start
 (1) Provide a list of upperclassmen and e-mail addresses by lab/PI.
 (1) Incorporate MEng students

9. LIFE AFTER BE

[9.1.1] I am interested in pursuing a post-graduate career opportunities in academia/industry/other. (1=academia,2=industry,3=other)	68	30 academia 31 industry 6 other
[9.2.1] I am well informed about post-graduate career opportunities in industry.	69	2.81±1.14
[9.2.2] I am well informed about post-graduate career opportunities in academia.	70	3.09±1.15
[9.2.3] I am well informed about post-graduate career opportunities outside of research and development.	70	2.19±1.09
[9.3.1] I am aware that the BE Board sponsors an Industrial Seminar Series (ISS).	69	4.14±1.29
[9.3.2] To date, I have attended a total of 1/2/3/more than 3 ISS seminars. (1=1,2=2,3=3,4=more than 3)	57	13 1 9 2 16 3 19 > 3
[9.3.3] I feel that the ISS seminars are conducted too often/not often enough/just often enough. (1=too often,2=not often enough,3=just often enough)	62	8 too often 12 not often enough 42 just often enough
[9.3.4] I think the diversity of topics covered in the ISS is appropriate.	56	3.34±1.28
[9.4.com] What could the BE Division and/or the BE Board do to aid in career decisions?		
(1) We should have a mailing list of job openings. I feel at a tremendous disadvantage compared to colleagues in other departments because i don't have access to the job information they do.		
(1) Perhaps offer a series of job application workshops -- not just identifying what type of career to pursue, but how to effectively pursue that career (submitting resumes, interviewing, job talks, etc.)		
(1) Perhaps as more people graduate from the program, publish a document or section of the BE handbook listing opportunities and examples of graduates working in those capacities.		
(1) Have organized talks with the recent graduates who are pursuing industry, or perhaps others from other schools WHO HOLD A BIOENGINEERING DEGREE. One of my concerns is that we will not fit into the standard model for most departments. It appears that even in Biomedical Engineering departments, people have more classical training.		

10. GENERAL

[10.1.1] The BE Division is responsive to my needs.	69	3.88±0.98
[10.2.1] I feel that my stipend provides adequate financial support.	70	3.29±1.22

My major concerns in graduate school are:

Please rank in terms of importance (1=most important,8=least important)

[10.3.1]	thesis work	72	1.99±2.02
[10.3.2]	relationship with my advisor	71	3.31±1.60
[10.3.3]	graduating	72	3.68±1.96
[10.3.5]	finding a job	71	4.49±2.07
[10.3.4]	relationship with my lab	71	4.77±1.60
[10.3.6]	social life	70	4.90±2.05
[10.3.7]	money/stipend	70	5.14±2.05
[10.3.8]	housing	70	6.56±2.03

[10.4.com] What would you like to change in BE?

(1) So far, so good.

(1) Transparency of Tenure Decisions.

(1) I think that having recommended rotations and/or a later date for advisor choosing would really decrease the pressure felt by first-years during the fall semester (420 & 430 are hard enough!). I know that I would have followed a very different path had I had this experience.

(1) I think BE is a great department, and I would definitely not change my choice. I do think that its priorities are, at times, a little misplaced. But the faculty has also let the students take a tremendous role in forming the department, so perhaps it's a reflection of that. It's probably the most democratically run department that I know of. But I think the lack of perspective that comes with the inexperience of grad students is also reflected in the extra things that it offers. We have diversity meetings and social hours which are fine, but we don't have resume building workshops and seminars on hunting for faculty positions or sources of information about finding the best postdoctoral positions.

(1) Unfortunately, the way the courses are structured in BE in the first year, many of the ABS students and those who are weaker in the engineering subjects are treated by the rest of the class as second class students. This is the sad truth but I feel that this stems from the fact that the BE students do not have to take courses with a large biology focus and find it difficult to appreciate why the ABS students are struggling with the engineering coursework. Since this is a BE division where engineering tools are applied to biology, all students in the division should be adequately exposed to both. My feeling is that many of the BE students either hate taking the undergrad biology requirements that they have to take or find ways and means to get their advisors to waive the mandatory requirement. This is the wrong approach and we should have core courses that more effectively blend both aspects together.

[10.5.com] Please submit any comments (general or specifically applying to this survey) to the BE Student Board in the field below:

(1) Great survey! It addressed many of the issues I've heard discussed over the past year. Good luck in your discussion this weekend...

(1) I think this department is far superior to others I have seen in terms of the administration of an academic program and maintaining a social atmosphere. However, because we are MIT, I feel we should be in a position to lead the rest of the country in getting a diverse class, which is somewhat poor in its current state. Besides this, I think the department has really little to improve.

(1) Make it more clear that students can use graduate engineering classes not on the "officially approved electives list" to satisfy their engineering elective requirements, since the student knows best what courses are relevant to their research.